

**FINAL REPORT  
OF THE  
COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
STUDY COMMISSION**



**Indiana Legislative Services Agency  
200 W. Washington St., Suite 301  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789**

**October, 1998**

**County Government Study Commission**

## **Membership Roster**

### **Representatives**

Bob Kuzman, Chair  
Crown Point

Vern Tincher  
Riley

Gloria Goeglein  
Ft. Wayne

Matt Whetstone  
Brownsburg

### **Senators**

Becky Skillman  
Bedford

Steve Johnson  
Kokomo

Rose Antich  
Merrillville

Vi Simpson  
Bloomington

### **Lay Members**

John Catey  
Richmond

Al Dillon  
Richmond

Richard Dodge  
Pleasant Lake

Garland Ferrell  
Lebanon

Frank Fritch  
Tipton

Vernon Jewell  
Columbus

Douglas Lechner  
Needham

Jean Paul Lushin  
Kokomo

Bill Mansard  
Terre Haute

Gloria Stephani  
Knox

Margaret Tucker  
Spencer

### **Legislative Services Agency Staff**

Beverly Holloway  
Fiscal Analyst for the Commission

Ross Hooten  
Attorney for the Commission

James Jett  
Attorney for the Commission

## **I. INTRODUCTION AND REASONS FOR STUDY**

The Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation (P.L. 109-1997) directing the Commission to study the following:

- (1) How to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of county government by examining the functions and duties associated with all elected county officials and departments of county government. The Commission shall focus on how these functions and duties relate to the functions and duties of other elected county officials, departments of county government, and other state and local governmental entities.
- (2) The functions and duties of elected county officials and departments of county government that should be more clearly defined by statute to avoid disputes over allocation of power of county government.
- (3) The functions and duties of elected county officials and departments of county government that should be eliminated, altered, or reassigned to other elected county officials, departments of county government, or other state or local governmental entities.
- (4) The functions and duties of county commissioners in Lake County and St. Joseph County and how their legislative and executive powers compare to county commissioners in other counties.

## **II. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM**

The Commission met twice during the interim.

At the first meeting on July 17, 1998, the Commission reviewed the items directed for study by P.L. 109-1997. It received a summary of the work completed by the Commission in the 1997 interim. Due to the lack of a quorum the Commission did not take any official action.

The Commission met for the second time on October 22, 1998. The Commission heard testimony from Nick Pasyanos, Association of Indiana Counties (AIC), regarding recommendations made by the AIC to the Governor's Commission on Taxes. The Commission heard a status report on the County Task Force from Matt Brooks, AIC.

## **IV. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY**

The Commission heard testimony from Nick Pasyanos, Association of Indiana Counties (AIC), regarding the AIC's concerns with property taxes. Mr. Pasyanos also shared with Commission members the recommendations made by the AIC to the Governor's Commission on Taxes.

Mr. Brooks updated Commission members on the status of the County Task Force. Mr. Brooks stated that the AIC has brought together a number of county elected officials and representatives of many county affiliated groups to discuss the role and function of county government and to find opportunities for improved efficiencies in county operation and function. He stated that Task Force members were assigned to specific subcommittees. The subcommittee's are: (1) Administration (including employment and public purchasing); (2) Courts/Corrections (including juvenile detention); (3) Environment (including drainage and land-use); (4) Finance (including budgeting and economic development); (5) Health and Welfare; (6) Infrastructure (including bridges, roads, and public transportation); and (7) Taxation/Assessment. Each subcommittee was instructed to determine the issues facing county government.

Mr. Brooks told the Commission that the Task Force will continue working over the next few months to develop specific recommendations on the issues identified by the subcommittees. Mr. Brooks stated that the goal of each recommendation is improved county operation. He added that the recommendations will be presented to the Commission at a future meeting.

Mr. Pasyanos stated that discussions with County Task Force members revealed that many local officials do not understand the roles and responsibilities of other local officials.

## **V. COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Commission made no findings of fact, and no recommendations were made.

The final report of the Commission was unanimously adopted by a voice vote.

### **WITNESS LIST**

Matt Brooks, Association of Indiana Counties  
Nick Pasyanos, Association of Indiana Counties

A copy of this report is available on the Internet. Reports, minutes and notices are organized by committee. This report and other documents for this Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.state.in.us.legislative/>.